

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resource Commission**

ITEM

21

DECISION

TOPIC

Contract with Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship for the Big Creek Water Quality Improvement Project

Commission approval is requested for a three year-service contract with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. The contract will begin on the date of commencement and terminate on March 31, 2013. The total amount of this contract shall not exceed \$89,525. DNR shall have the option to renew this contract as long as this contract and any extensions do not exceed a six-year period. This contract will be funded through the Lakes Restoration Program established under Iowa Code Section 456A.33B.

Big Creek State Park/Lake is a major recreational destination for the citizens of Iowa. Over 350,000 visitors travel to Big Creek each year and they annually generate over \$19 million in spending. Improving the lakes water quality through watershed improvements is critical to maintaining and even increasing recreational use levels.

Big Creek Lake is currently listed on the EPA 303d list for bacteria and historically has been listed for sediments and nutrients. A comprehensive review of the watershed indicates that approximately 6,379 tons of sediment and 8,280 pounds of phosphorus are annually delivered to the lake. These numbers must be significantly reduced to preserve the lake's water quality and extend the lifespan of the lake. Additionally, waste products from humans and animals within the watershed that adversely impact water quality must also be reduced.

Commission approval will allow the DNR to assist with this project by providing funding resources where appropriate and allocating staff to improve the lakes watershed. Details to the proposed financial commitment for this project are outlined in the attached letter dated May 8, 2009. This project is critical to improving the lake's water quality and in removing the system from the "Impaired Waters" list. In addition, Big Creek Lake is listed as one of our 35 significant priority lakes for restoration and State restoration criteria require that in-lake restoration efforts can only take place after watershed nutrient/sediment issues have been addressed.

Joe Larscheid, Fisheries Bureau Chief
Conservation and Recreation Division
March 11, 2010



CHESTER J. CULVER, GOVERNOR
PATTY JUDGE, LT. GOVERNOR

STATE OF IOWA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
RICHARD A. LEOPOLD, DIRECTOR

May 8, 2009

Polk County SWCD
1513 North Ankeny Blvd., Suite 3
Ankeny, IA 50023

Re: Conservation and Recreation Division Big Creek Lake/Watershed Water Quality Protection Project Goals and Funding Commitments

The Conservation and Recreation Division of the DNR provided a letter of support on March 31, 2009 that described our strong support for this project. This current letter further defines our goals and states our financial commitment to this project as follows:

1. DNR Park Staff in consultation with our Wildlife Staff will develop a goose management plan to disrupt geese from utilizing the beach and work to reduce the resident goose population. We are also seeking to acquire equipment that will remove goose fecal matter from the beach area in an efficient and timely manner.
2. At a minimum, at least 10 of the worst 25 gullies on the public property will have grade stabilization structures or water/sediment control basins constructed to effectively trap 90% of the sediment reaching Big Creek Lake. We will start the environmental and archeological review of these sites during the summer/fall of 2009, with construction slated for the fall of 2010.
3. Stream bank erosion annually contributes over 50% of the sediment delivery to Big Creek Lake. Impacted areas will be prioritized; the watershed project coordinator will work with the DNR Private Lands Biologist to develop potential structural changes and management options; interested landowners will be contacted and offered up to 90% cost share (15% lake restoration funds) for approved stream bank stabilization projects. Livestock exclusion will be considered as an option and can be coupled with practices such as stream bank restoration and or wildlife habitat improvement. Up to \$25,000 of DNR funds will be available over the 5 year project period for these techniques.
4. The DNR will agree to match the CRP signing incentive payment from \$100/acre to \$200/acre for prioritized buffer and upland CRP areas in the watershed (up to 300 acres or \$30,000 for the life of the project).
5. The DNR will pay 10% of the watershed project coordinator's annual salary (\$34,525 over the five year life of the project).

All above DNR financial commitments are contingent on continuing to receive annual Lake Restoration funding. A yearly project progress report that includes current expenses and the next years anticipated funding needs should also be provided to all sponsors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike McGhee".

Mike McGhee, DNR Project Coordinator

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